

SPECIAL FALL  
PREVIEW  
ISSUE

# Viz

Volume 1, No. 12

**NAUSICÄ**

**PART TWO**

**Is Coming**

This month, Viz is proud to announce the September release of the continuing adventures of Nausicaä. Part Two picks up where Part One left off—and to remind us of what happened in Part One, this issue of Viz-In kicks off with a special review of Nausicaä by Gerard Jones.



© Hayao Miyazaki/Takuma Shoten, 1989

## In EXPECTATION OF NAUSICAÄ PART TWO . . .

Japanese comics abound with post-holocaust earths. Viz Communications alone gives us *Fist of the North Star*, *Grey*, and *Nausicaä of the Valley of Wind*. I've mentioned the first two in these pages recently, and found things to praise; and I spent a great deal of time with the second, *Grey*, as its rewriter. But frankly, I think *Nausicaä* is a lot more fun than either of them.

*Fist of the North Star* has its frank, forceful violence. And *Grey* has its strange, icy power. But

*Nausicaä* has a richness and complexity, a variety of moods and tones, an extravagance of detail, that invites a long and deep immersion by the reader. Its characters, its relationships, its politics and ecology reveal themselves slowly and continue to change, drawing us in more deeply than those other, more bleak and severe series. *Nausicaä* sits in a territory between Tolkiennesque grand fantasy and the dark, dystopian futures of socially conscious science fiction.

Hayao Miyazaki manages a dangerous balance of elements throughout this long series. The very first scene is a blend of exhilarating action, fascinating detail, fantastical beauty, and even a little characterization. As the series flows along, the emphasis may shift this way or that way for

brief periods, but no element overshadows the others for long. There'll be a flashing *H. Beam Piper* scene of aerial flight, then a moment of silent Moebius-like prettiness, then an explosion of revolting crawly worms. Yet there's rarely a thematic conflict, never an awkward transition.

In nearly every scene Miyazaki sustains a tension between grisly hardship and human gentleness. The entire seventh volume is a marvel of such counterpoint. *Nausicaä* sucks the poisoned blood from a wounded man's mouth in order to save his life; it is an image of matter-of-fact ugliness such as only a Japanese cartoonist could master, yet it's suffused with the quiet nobility of *Nausicaä*'s act.

Several pages later, Miyazaki stages a marvellously stirring and

(continued on the next page)

by Gerard Jones



(continued from the front page)

authentic bit of air-to-ground combat, which flows unexpectedly but perfectly into a quiet bit of human drama, as Nausicaä tries to find a home for a pair of orphans she's taken in. Neither scene is overplayed; each is executed with such economy and unadorned verve that it plays elegantly off the other.

A fine balance is also struck between science and imagination. There's a solid ecological sense underlying this world of giant fungi, enormous insects, poison seas and variously altered humans. Every creature and plant has its origins in real terrestrial life, and the evolutionary intermediaries aren't difficult to imagine. But there's a wonderful leap of fantasy, a twist of the truly grotesque, that sets the story free of scientific speculation and plants a shuddery surprise around

every bend.

The characters in *Nausicaä* are not especially quirky or complex. As in much heroic fantasy, the characters are occasionally over-distilled until they become grand types instead of people. It's also a rather emotionally restrained comic, by Japanese adventure standards, as if the considerable amount of thought put into it by its creator were holding it back a little. Sometimes I found myself wishing for the extravagant characterizations of a Rumiko Takahashi or the volatility of a Yoshihisa Tagami. But as a craftsman, as a builder of worlds, Hayao Miyazaki is supreme.

Ultimately, this is just another heroic fantasy story, with the usual blend of battles, creatures, courtly politics, and innocent bravery. But it's just so clever in conception and

skillful in execution that it's a joy even to those of us who've tired of the genre.

The story itself is the most intricate and fully developed I have yet seen in manga. And therein lies the greatest frustration of *Nausicaä*. Because the story is incomplete. The current seven-part Viz series takes us through about half the plot, right to the brink of a major turning point. After a hiatus, Viz plans to bring out the remaining five completed volumes. But even those don't finish the tale, because Mr. Miyazaki has been distracted by movie work and hasn't been able to bring his *magnum manga* to its long, long-awaited conclusion. Pretty soon, he says, he'll put the animation cels aside and get back down to the job. But for now, the battle for this world at the edge of the Sea of Corruption remains undecided.

In the meantime, though, there is much to enjoy. I've only read these first seven volumes, and I already feel that I've indulged myself in a substantial and satisfying bit of comic book reading. *Nausicaä* is a slower and more involving read than most of the manga we've seen on these shores thus far. The art alone is worth a long look, as are the superb translating and relettering jobs by Studio Proteus. Even with the final chapters still missing, this is a story worth reading.

## AMERICA IS READY FOR CRYING FREEMAN

When Viz Comics began importing manga to the English-speaking world it was really an experiment in publishing. Those who conceived of Viz knew they were taking a big risk in bringing something so foreign into a market dominated by superheroes and carbon-copy art. The past year has shown that the American, Canadian, and British comic book public is willing to read quality products regardless of their country of origin. Now, armed with the tastes of comic fandom, Viz makes its boldest move and brings to you the title most requested by the readership.

*Crying Freeman* is a hit waiting

to happen. Written by the already popular Kazuo Koike, author of the critically acclaimed *Lone Wolf and Cub* (First Comics), and wonderfully rendered by fan-favorite artist Ryoichi Ikegami (*Mai, The Psychic Girl*), the eight-issue series is more than just an exciting read, it's an experience to be sought after and relished. *Crying Freeman* is the story of Yo Hinomura, a young potter who is kidnapped and brainwashed by the sinister Chinese crime syndicate, the 108 Dragons, who turn him into a super-assassin. Telling you any more about the story would spoil it.

Let there be no mistakes about

it—*Crying Freeman* is for adults only. The story content is mature, the violence graphic, and the art is filled with sexually explicit scenes. The comic will be presented in Viz's Select Comic Format. Each issue will be 64 pages in length and the book will carry a \$3.50 cover price. Rewriting the book will be Gerard Jones and Will Jacobs, whose various collaborations include *The Trouble With Girls* (Eternity Comics) and *The Beaver Papers*. Gerard Jones is also the rewriter of *Lum*. *Crying Freeman* is set for an October release and will run a total of eight issues.



...The Japanese entertainment industry continued its tribute to the father of modern Japanese comics, Osamu Tezuka, who passed away on February 9 of this year (see Viz-In #10). Nearly every comic and animation magazine in Japan featured special commemorative sections highlighting the life and works of Tezuka, and the Kawasaki Municipal Museum hosted a special

exhibit of Tezuka's creations. Perhaps the greatest tribute to Tezuka was the creation of a musical based on his life's work, "The Fire Bird."

...Japan's premiere comic fanzine, *The Comic Box*, recently announced manga's best sellers for 1988 (as determined from a sampling of stores nationwide). The list is dominated by Rumiko Takahashi's kung-fu comedy, *Ranma 1/2*. Issue #3 of the series was rated as Japan's top seller, with *Ranma* #2, #4, and #5 placing in the top ten, and #1 and #6 ranked in the top twenty.

Takahashi's graphic novel *The Mermaid's Forest* placed seventh.

...In Viz-In #10, we reported that Japan's leading animation magazine, *Animage*, treated fans to free copies of Viz's English translation of the immensely popular *Nausicaä* #1. Well, the magazine didn't leave fans of the translated version hanging; they made a present of copies of issue #2 to five hundred lucky fans, some of whom showed their gratitude by posing for a poster which was included in *Animage*'s April issue.

...The 1988 Japanese Ani-

mation Awards were announced recently, with two full-length feature animation films dominating the show. *Nausicaä* creator Hayao Miyazaki's *Totoro* locked horns with *A Firefly's Grave* for top honors. *A Firefly's Grave*, which is based on a novel by Akiyuki Nosaka, is a tragic story of the hardships suffered by two young siblings in the wake of World War Two. The awards committee, unable to choose between these two great films, made a special exception and presented the Best Animation award to both films.

# VIZ FALL/WINTER PUBLISHING PLAN REVEALED

As Viz Comics enters its second year, certain truths about the comic market have become painfully and/or pleasantly clear. For example, we know now that there is a huge following for manga here in the Western World. That's the pleasant truth. The painful truth is that retailers have been guilty of under-ordering our books, denying the pleasure to fans who crave our quality products. We hope our Fall/Winter Plan will change the latter, making the former even more pleasant.

Beginning in August, Viz will soothe the thousands of fans who missed out on the sold-out series, *Grey*, by compiling the series' nine-issue run into a two-volume graphic novel set. The *Grey* Graphic Novel will be presented in the same format as the successful *Mai* Graphic Novel. Each volume will be 290 pages in length (price: \$16.95) with soft cover illustrated dust jackets. Volume One will ship in August, with Volume Two following in October.

In September, Viz will make the whole world happy by continuing Hayao Miyazaki's *Nausicaä of the Valley of Wind*. The book, labeled Part Two, will run for five issues in the same format as Part One with the same price tag as well (\$2.95). And for those of you who missed selected sold-out issues of Part One, Viz is planning a graphic novel collection of *Nausicaä* Part One beginning December.

Viz's October release, *Crying Freeman*, is described in detail elsewhere in this issue, so we won't repeat ourselves here, except to say that it's a great series.

Finally, November will see the release of a special one-shot graphic album by *Lum* creator Rumiko Takahashi entitled *Fire Tripper*. *Fire Tripper* is a time travel story written and drawn in the same style that has made Rumiko Takahashi as popular as any other comic book artist or writer here in the United States. In conjunction with the release of the graphic album, Viz is planning an English-dubbed version of the *Fire Tripper* video just in time for the Christmas season.

In addition to all these exciting projects, Viz is considering several other titles for publication beginning this Winter. Among the candidates are *Horobi* (see this issue's Viz-Pick); *Baob*, a science-fiction thriller by Hirohiko Araki; and *Cobra*, a space adventure by Buichi Terasawa.

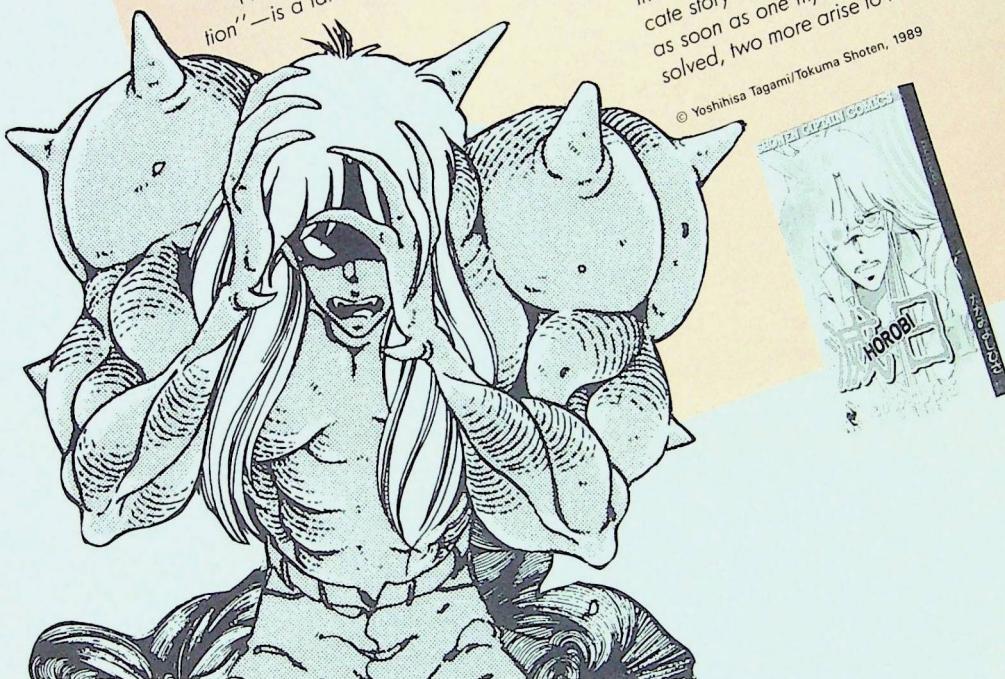
VIZ-PICKS

## HOROBI A Horror Both Frightening and Sublime

Set in present-day Japan, it is the story of the inheritors of an ancient power that allows them to make the creatures that inhabit their own dreams come to life. These masters of nightmare have banded into two separate, philosophically opposed groups: the Yamako, who wish to control the world through their power, and the Satori, who stand ready to fight the Yamako for peace and freedom.

The horror in *Horobi* is heightened by the mystery that shrouds the history surrounding the Yamako and the Satori, as well as by Tagami's intricate story-telling technique. In *Horobi*, as soon as one mystery is about to be solved, two more arise to take its place.

© Yoshihisa Tagami/Tokuma Shoten, 1989



## UP CLOSE AND PERSONAL

### VIZ MEETS THE RETAILERS AT THE CAPITAL CITY SALES CONFERENCE

It was an *Invasion* the likes of which Wisconsin may never recover from. Hordes of us descended like vultures on the sleepy little town of Madison like *Aliens* from outer space. What were we there for? Were we searching for the *Badger* himself? Actually, it was nothing as horrible (or hilarious) as all that. We were all there to get to know each other a little better.

Capital City Distribution hosted their Second Annual Sales Conference in Madison, Wisconsin, this past April in the hopes that it would bring comic book retailers and publishers closer together. The conference was, unequivocally, a success, and Viz Comics was happy to be a part of the festivities.

The main attraction of the conference was the publisher's exhibit room where the retailers had a chance to meet the publishers face to face to discuss mutual concerns such as why

certain products get more retailer support than others and what the publishers themselves could do to help the retailers promote their stores. The Viz booth, manned by Viz General Manager, Seiji Horibuchi, and myself, was constantly swamped by retailers anxious to see what Viz had to offer. It was at the sales conference, actually, that Viz made the first public announcement of plans to produce *Crying Freeman*. We were overwhelmed by the amount of support for the project offered by the retailers. The conference also gave us a chance to speak with retailers about what you, the fan, like to see and buy, and we feel well-armed with information to help us plan our Fall publishing strategy.

On a final note, Viz would like to thank Capital City once again for hosting a most enjoyable conference. And a special tip of the hat to Cindy Marks of Capital who helped arrange an interview for Viz on Madison TV News.

Jerry A. Novick  
Sales Manager

# VIZ SELECT COMICS

—Deluxe, squarebound, bookshelf formats  
—Black & white with full-color covers

## LUM \* URUSEI YATSURA #5

### 56 PAGE SPECIAL ISSUE

by Rumiko Takahashi  
monthly, b & w  
8 issues  
\$3.25 USA/\$4.40 CAN

Travel in space and time with the sexiest tour guide in comic books! First, in "Oyuki," Ataru's laid low by a cold just when Lum is gone long enough to give him time alone with Shinobu. But that doesn't keep another alien beauty from dropping in on Ataru, via an interdimensional portal connecting his closet to her home world, Neptune! Then, in "We are the Children," Ataru is late for school and Lum is determined to get him to class on time. Unfortunately, the time she gets him there is in the future, way in the future, where Ataru encounters his own son! But if Ataru has a son, then who is the mother?

**Shipping September 5**



## FIST OF THE NORTH STAR #6

story by Buronson  
art by Tetsuo Hara  
monthly, b & w, 48 pages  
8 issues  
\$2.95 USA/\$4.00 CAN

Strained to the limits by his encounter with Shin, Kenshiro wanders the desert in search of a place to recuperate. However, Ken and Bat's vacation at a desert oasis is cut short when they discover that Lynne (remember her from issue #1?) has been kidnapped by the Provident, a group of men who believe that they have been chosen by God to rule the world. Can even the Fist of the North Star defeat the religiously zealous? Find out in "Oasis Reunion" and "Satan's Execution Block."

**Shipping September 5**



## NAUSICAA OF THE VALLEY OF WIND PART TWO, BOOK 1

by Hayao Miyazaki  
monthly, b & w, 56 pages  
5 issues  
\$2.95 USA/\$4.00 CAN

Return to the Valley of Wind as the adventures of everyone's favorite princess continue. The whole lovable cast is back as Nausicaä strives to unlock the secrets of the Sea of Corruption and unite the peoples of Earth once more. But is there anyone who can bring an end to the war between the Doroks and the Torumekians? All questions will be answered as Viz continues its presentation of the world's most talked-about manga series.

**Shipping September 26**



## MAI, THE PSYCHIC GIRL Volume 4

story by Kazuya Kudo  
art by Ryoichi Ikegami  
A VIZ GRAPHIC NOVEL  
bimonthly, b & w, 282 pages  
4 volumes  
\$16.95 USA/\$24.25 CAN

It's an all out psychic battle between Mai and Garten for the life of Mai's father! But even if Mai can survive her encounter with Garten, will she have enough power left to face the combined might of three other psychics bent on her destruction? The end is at hand as the Wisdom Alliance vows to go to any lengths to kill Mai. THIS VOLUME DOES CONTAIN NUDITY.

**Shipping September 26**

## VIZ-IN NEWS MAGAZINE

\$4.00 per bundle of 100

The world of manga and anime is on the move, and Viz is the industry's best travel agent! Viz-In is filled with articles about Japanese manga and animation as well as features on the people who bring you your favorite comics and videos from around the world. Make your plans now and let Viz-In be your guide!

**Shipping September 19**

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Executive Editor / Seiji Horibuchi  
Editor / John Togashi  
Staff Writer / Jerry A. Novick  
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## ◀ A NOTE TO SUBSCRIBERS ▶

Ever since Viz entered the comic book publishing field as an independent company, we have been flooded with requests for information on how to subscribe to our books. For a long time, we were answering these requests as well as actually soliciting subscriptions through our various publications. Now, however, with the increase in the number of titles we produce, as well as our expansion into the video market (see Fall Plan Revealed)

we find ourselves unable to continue our subscription service. We will, of course, fill all subscription requests which have already been received, but we regret that we will be unable to fill new requests. If you are having trouble finding certain issues of your favorite Viz title, then inform your retailer. Maybe you can convince him or her that they should be ordering more Viz products.

**CRYING FREEMAN**  
BY KAZUO KOIKE &  
RYOICHI IKEGAMI

